



During the last 50 years, there has been an increasing dependency on information technology (IT) to create and deliver products and services. Whether the health-care industry provides patient services over the Internet or the retail industry allows customers to shop online, industries embracing every category rely on IT to provide services driven by consumer demand. Providing these IT-enabled business services is critical to a company's revenue stream, its customer satisfaction, and its profitability.

IBM Service Management is central to the IT infrastructure that provides these business services. IBM has transformed the scope of service management to encompass the automation of IT processes, network operations, IT assets, and industrial assets. This allows organizations to integrate and automate business service processes, provides a simple and consolidated way to manage their assets, and ultimately increases business efficiency and saves money.

Creating and managing new IT-enabled business services requires implementing a coordinated approach among business units, development teams, and IT operations. IBM is taking on this challenge with the IBM Service Management strategy, drawing upon years of consulting experience in creating, deploying, and operating IT-enabled business services. Our comprehensive approach to service management focuses on the integration of people, processes, information, and technology, supported by best practices and consulting. The transition to service management is a fundamental industry transition, and to help our customers with it, we provide highly qualified professionals in strategy, business, and IT consulting who can perform an assessment of the current state of an organization and recommend a staged road map for this transition.

This special issue of the *IBM Systems Journal* is a reflection of the years of expertise gained by the IBM corporation. It demonstrates thought leadership and teamwork throughout all divisions of IBM, especially the IBM Software Group, Research Division, and the Global Business Services and Global Technology Services teams. Not only is this cross-IBM team creating and driving products and consulting-service assets, but is also engaged more broadly with standards organizations to create and drive industry standards for service management.

In presenting this special issue, it is our goal to describe the current state of IBM Service Management and suggest potential new directions in this exciting field.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Zollar", is positioned above the printed name.

Al Zollar
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